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Horace Alexander
(1889 - 1989)

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Sd/-
(HORACE ALEXANDER)
29th Feb. 1968

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH

HORACE ALEXANDER

Recorded on August 9, 1967
in London

B.R. Nanda: Mr Alexander, when did you first get interested in India?

Horace Alexander: One day, I forget the year, I suppose it was about 1925 or 1926, a friend of mine in Birmingham where I was teaching - the friend was Jack Hoyland who had spent a good many years in India - said he wanted me to meet his friend, Mr. C.F. Andrews. Mr. Andrews, at that time, was giving a lot of attention to the problem of drug addiction in India and what he regarded as the immoral government revenue from this. Jack Hoyland knew that my father had spent a great part of his life in fighting the opium trade which the British had forced on China after the Opium Wars, and so he thought I might be interested in this matter of opium, the point being that the League of Nations was about to have a conference on drug addiction and the excessive use of drugs and drug trade; and C.F. Andrews felt that the case that the Government of India would present from India needed to be supplemented by somebody who could present an unofficial case which he would put forward. Well, I did not feel myself specially interested in this. But as any one who knew C.F. Andrews would realise, after an hour with him he assumed that of course I should do the things he wanted me to do. He was not the kind of man you could say 'no' to. He did it so gently, but so convincingly that in the end I said: "Yes, I will do my best to try and help you". Then he said that an Indian friend of his, a young man, Tarini Sinha, would be coming to England very soon and he would work with me and explain things to me. So it all began that way. And then I was teaching international relations at the Quaker College of Woodbrooke at that time. I hoped that they would let me have a year off to see the wider world. I had never been beyond Europe, indeed

Western Europe, and so the time came when I was able to get a year to travel. I specially wanted to see what the British were doing in parts of the world that were under British imperial control and so I was encouraged to go and spend six months in India and at the same time to see some other countries where there was heavy drug addiction, opium smoking and so on and to do a report on that and incidentally to see what I could about a lot of other things. Of course, C.F. Andrews made himself responsible for seeing that I met a lot of people in India, including Gandhiji.

My wife and I were talking about this just the other day. She reminded me of something which I think may have been decisive as a sort of turning point. I had already been in India for two or three months. My complacency and idea of the British preparing India by stages for self-government and all that sort of thing had been a good deal undermined already. Then I was in Orissa where there had been bad floods and a lot of damage - people were drowned and cattle destroyed and all the rest of it. What really shocked me was that even the Calcutta papers seemed not to want to publish much about this. They were making the least of it and insisting that there was no need for anybody to be bothered about it.

I went to Orissa primarily because it was one of the areas where there was heavy opium addiction. While I was staying in Cuttack, as it was then known, a British official came to see me. I cannot remember how I got in touch with him. He was actually an Irishman. That explains what followed. I can still see that man pacing up and down across the room and saying: "You come all the way from England and go round this country for months just concerning yourself over this matter of drug addiction. Why are you not giving your attention to the whole problem of government and mis-government? Can't you see the things that are being done in the name of your country in this country?"

B.R. Nanda: That is remarkable.

Horace Alexander: Well, yes, it came exactly at the right moment, because I had been seeing things and I had been getting very much disturbed about it.

B.R. Nanda: It came from the horse's mouth.

Horace Alexander: Exactly. It came from the horse's mouth; it came from a British I.C.S. Officer. Again, fortunately as it turned out, I could not see Gandhi as I had hoped soon after I arrived in India; he had encouraged C.F. Andrews in this whole undertaking about the Government's drug policy and incidentally he had sent me a cable (instigated of course by C.F. Andrews) that I read out at the conference in Geneva the year before. But he was on tour and I could not see him when I arrived. So, it had to be at the end of my journey, instead of the beginning. Then I did meet him, we talked a bit about opium. I do not need to go into that. Then I said to him, "Now I am just going back to England. I have seen a lot of things in this country and talked to Charles Andrews and other people who have opened my eyes to things I did not know. What ought I to say to anybody who would listen to me when I get back to England?" The reply was: "First we want you to get off our backs". This was a little sharp and very direct. I had not expected it.

B.R. Nanda: This coupled with the British officer's remark!

Horace Alexander: He meant the British, of course. But he said, 'you'. He included me in the British. I was British. He was quite right, and it went home.

B.R. Nanda: You stayed on for some time after meeting Gandhi?

Horace Alexander: No, I came home very soon after that. That was, I suppose, in March and I left in April.

B.R. Nanda: In 1928?

Horace Alexander: Yes, 1927-28.

B.R. Nanda: Were you with him, Mrs Alexander?

Mrs. Alexander: No.

Horace Alexander: Then I wrote a few letters to Gandhi in the next year, I suppose, and kept up my contact with him in various ways. Reginald Reynolds, whose name you will know, had been a student of mine. He was going through a rather difficult time. He was not happy in his work. He was then quite a young man. I said to him one day: "What do you think of going and spending a year perhaps with Gandhi?" He said; "Could I do that?". I said, "Well, I do not see why you should not". He said, "Of course I would love to do it". That was arranged and that was a new connection with India through Reynolds. Then came the Civil Disobedience under Irwin, the Salt March and all that. By this time I was following Indian affairs pretty closely but verymuch on my own. I was not connected with any special group or association in England. I can't recall the exact dates, but Krishna Menon, turned up and formed his India League and I had published in my journal letters from India with a preface by C.F. Andrews and with a concluding essay in which I pleaded for full Independence at once.

So, Krishna Menon asked me to serve on the Committee of the India League. So, all these things gradually accumulated and Andrews himself was moving to and fro and I met him again when he came to England. He was in England during the Civil Disobedience that followed the Salt March and he of course, knew Halifax personally. (He was Lord Irwin then, he became Halifax later). He was convinced that Irwin would like to find a way to an understanding with the Congress leaders, and with Gandhi, and he suggested that I should go quietly to India and see if I could help. Of course, he advised me; he said, "It is no use my going". My name is known. The press and others would follow me and wonder what I was up to. But you are not known. So you could just go and no one will pay much attention to you". It happened that I had a personal link which gave me an introduction to Sir George Schuster who was the Finance

Minister of the Viceroy's Council. So I set off with a companion from the Indian YMCA in London who also came along and held my hand and was very helpful to me and we met people in Delhi. Sir George Schuster asked me to stay with him and Irwin was very cordial.

It was the time when Sapru and Jayakar were trying to bring about a settlement and I just waited to see what they were going to do. Meanwhile I travelled around and met various people. In the end I was able to see Gandhiji in the jail in Poona and I had a most interesting talk with him. Andrews had suggested that my line would be not to talk about any political solution, but to try to find a common ground in constructive activity where the British Government could promise that they would actively support the things that Gandhi was interested in. He had put out Eleven Points at one stage.

B.R. Nanda: Yes.

Horace Alexander: So, we worked on the basis of his Eleven Points. I must say that Irwin and Schuster were very understanding of that kind of approach and co-operative over it. However, actually nothing came out of it. But it did me a good thing. I had a very good talk with Gandhiji in the Poona jail. I learnt years afterwards that he told his fellow-prisoner, Kaka Kalelkar, when he got back into the cell that he had a wonderful talk. The thing that I recall from that conversation is this. We got on to the matter of human trust - trust between humanbeings - and he confessed that he had been disappointed in the early meetings with Irwin. That comes out in all the biographies and stories and accounts of the early talks that he had. Gandhi said to me: "You see, in spite of all that Andrews had told me about Irwin, I found he (Irwin) did not really trust me". So I went back to Simla and made my report to Irwin - Irwin was the sort of man who would be perfectly open with you and expected you to be equally open. He would be very frank with you. He wanted to know exactly what impressions I had formed

as I went round the country. I told him various things. He was not surprised at the things I had said. But then we came to the talk with Gandhi and I told him this. He did not get upset or angry. He said, "This is very interesting. This matter of human trust is a very interesting problem and I am glad you told me this. I must think about it. I quite agree that I was disappointed in him too when we met." As much as to say this is something fundamental. Whether in fact that helped either of them to a happier relationship when they met some months later, I just don't know.

B.R. Nanda: But Gandhiji's trust was very fundamental. When he trusted you, he would be prepared to concede anything to you. But when he distrusted you, he would not accept even the most rational solution proposed by you.

Horace Alexander: Exactly, and I think it is probably fair to say that Irwin, perhaps in part helped by that report that I brought from Gandhi - but I cannot be sure of that - was eager to win his trust when he next met him.

B.R. Nanda: One thing I have seen from the records is that the reason why Gandhi-Irwin negotiations succeeded or to the extent they succeeded was because Irwin was interested in the success. All his advisers, to a man, were opposed to it. Governors, Members of the Council were all up in arms. "Now you talk of this man. You reach an agreement. It is the end of the road. It is no question of what you concede. The fact that you are going to deal with him is going to be fatal". I have seen the file on which this thing was done - he acted on his own eventually because all the advice was against this thing. "You will lose the support of the Muslims, of the princes and of the landlords and the classes on which you are resting and it is most fatal and it is most dangerous". But Irwin does not seem to have agreed there.

Horace Alexander: I got that impression of him not only in this last talk but in the earlier talks too. I remember his saying this quite openly in my first talks with him. His term as Viceroy was soon coming to an end. There was a

proposal that it might be extended. He said, "No, I want to get back and face my own Party in England".

B.R. Nanda: Now we come to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Then Gandhiji came to England.

Horace Alexander: Yes, quite so. I was among those who sent him cables urging him to come, believing as I did at that time that good would come from it. During the First Round Table Conference I was closely associated with some of the independent Members. There was a very fine Indian - K.T. Paul. He was an outstanding man. He came to the First Round Table Conference and he was trying all the time to break the deadlock and see if there was some way of arriving at a solution. He knew like anybody else that nothing could be done without Gandhi and the Congress. His effort in the first Conference in fact killed him. He stayed on too long in the winter and within two months after he got back to India he was dead. I had long talks with him and he was very much impressed with the way the Labour Government at that stage was trying to put the initiative on to the Indians and to say to them 'No, You agree together and whatever you agree together we will put through'. That was the line the Labour Government at that stage was taking, in the First Round Table Conference, and from what I heard of it from Mr. K.T. Paul I felt, that the Labour Government did mean busines and once Gandhiji could get here I thought he would find here that the things would not be as difficult as he had assumed. I had not seen the change in the attitude of the Government during this summer in 1931 ....

B.R. Nanda: In fact, the change took place while he was here.

Horace Alexander: Yes; but it was happening already.

B.R. Nanda: MacDonald was shaky on account of the crisis over the Gold Standard and the split in the Labour Party. The Election took place when he was here. Samuel Hoare came into Office.

Horace Alexander: MacDonald's Coalition Government was already in office when Gandhiji arrived. I think it must be so. Wedgwood Benn had gone, I think, and the Coalition Government had already been formed; MacDonald was the Prime Minister, but Hoare was at the India Office and the whole complexion of the Government was really quite different. It is true that Sankey stayed on as Lord Chancellor, largely because he was so determined to try and get the Indian settlement through; but Sankey by himself really could not do it when he had now a great Tory Opposition pretty well in control of the Government and certainly of the House of Commons. The Second Round Table Conference, of course, was a great disappointment and Gandhiji had a wretched time. Some even felt that it would have been better if he had not come because it was so disappointing compared with the whole atmosphere at the time of the First Conference.

To go on with my story, there was in London at that time a Group called Friends of India, which of course was in a sense in competition with the India League - there were two competing Groups of Indians who were pressing the case of Indian freedom. There was really no effective British Group at all. Towards the end of the Conference, before Gandhiji left - C.F. Andrews had already gone on some mission to South Africa, I think - I had a long talk with him one day about this. I said, "You see a very small group who are concerned about this and who want to state your case here and get it before the British public. Also we have not any money. But at the same time we feel that it should not be left entirely to the Indians to do this". He said, "I agree, but it would be far better if a British person could really give full time to it here. We have taken a view in the Congress that we must do our work in India and not in England. But still it would be good if there was some British ~~Government~~ person who did some work for us in England. I think I can arrange for money to be made available if there is somebody who would really undertake this". Then he said, "What would you think of Agatha Harrison for this work?" Well, I don't know how she

first came in contact with Andrews, but I knew that during the period of the conference, she had been doing secretarial work for him. Some work she had been doing earlier had come to an end.

B.R. Nanda: For whom?

Horace Alexander: She had been on a special mission to China. Then, she went with the Labour Commission to India. Mrs. Eileen Power asked her to go as an unofficial person, as an observer. She had already seen something of India. There was a break-up of her home; I think her mother died, and she wanted just to find something to fill in her time for a bit. She had not any means of her own. She was called to put in two or three months to help Andrews with a book he was writing at that time. I think it was his autobiography: "What I owe to Christ". She was typing out from his dictation, and doing it at 88 Knights Bridge, the house where Gandhiji spent all his days when he was here for the Conference. The Conference Headquarters was on the western side of London. He had seen Agatha Harrison at work and she had often helped with things whenever Mahadev and Pyarelal needed some English person to give some help. So he said, "what about Agatha Harrison, do you think she would undertake this?" I said, "Shall I go and call her up here and find out what she has to say?" I went downstairs and brought her to Gandhiji. Then Gandhiji put this proposal to her. Would she be willing to give her whole time as an interpreter for the Congress? She had already met Nehru and other leaders in India. She knew the people with whom she was going to have to deal. She said to Gandhiji: "This is a little sudden; may I have a little time to think it over?". He laughed and said, "Of course; will one day be enough?". I think she said that probably one day would be enough. She went back home to her sisters and she came back and said, "Yes; I believe I could".

B.R. Nanda: That was a great find. Was it not?

Horace Alexander: Yes, indeed. Of course, it was G.D. Birla who put up some money for her. She was a perfectly open

person and she used to tell everybody else including India Office people where the money was coming from and she would say: "I am not tied to anything; I am going to interpret the events in India to the best of my understanding". She said to Gandhiji: "Do you expect me to work with any particular group?". Gandhiji replied: "You and Horace just work together".

B.R. Nanda: This is most interesting light on the origins of the group.

Horace Alexander: This has never been published. I may yet write and publish something more about it. I was right in at that start.

In London, at that time there had been a group of Quakers led by Carl Heath, who was then the Secretary of the Friends Service Council in Friends House. Various meetings were arranged there, and there used to be a weekly silent prayer meeting during the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji had attended it twice, and we also got some of the Muslim leaders and others. Sankey also came once. We just sat for half an hour and had silent prayer together. Gandhiji had appreciated it very much and he had liked it. Carl Heath had been drawn into this concern; he had also been interested in India for many years and soon afterwards he said that he needed a little group, a committee of some kind. He suggested that India Conciliation Group would be a suitable title for it. I suggested that perhaps Agatha Harrison would like to be in the Group and perhaps acting with it. So it worked out that she became the Secretary of the India Concilation Group. That is what she called herself. We built up this Group by inviting people who had firsthand knowledge of India and requesting them to join it. After the groups became organised, Agatha Harrison, as the Group's spearhead, gained very quickly the confidence and respect of the British officials.

B.R. Nanda: What was the secret of that? It is amazing ~~that~~ since she was doing from the British point of view unpopular work. You, Agatha and C.F. Andrews were a very small minority at

that time, who were for Indian independence. I think it required great courage to say so at that time really. How is it that she struck this equation with the British officials, the India Office, and so on?

Horace Alexander: I would explain it in this way. You must include Carl Heath and no doubt others in this. The group acted in the belief that everybody concerned in this matter was acting from the highest motives and that our officials believed in what they were doing just as Gandhi and his people believed, but the trouble arose largely from lack of understanding, imagination.......

B.R. Nanda: And lack of communication.

Horace Alexander: Yes, lack of communication. To the extent that we could bridge that gap, we tried to do it. After all, the reports received from official channels in India were hostile, partly because the officials never met the Congress leaders - I won't say whose fault that was, neither side particularly wanted it.

B.R. Nanda: Apart from that, the official channels were the Police. The activities of the Congress leaders were reported to them by the Head Constables of Police and Sub-Inspectors of Police and therefore, the reports from the formal channels were more threatening, more minatory and more alarming than what the things would really be. As you said quite correctly it might have been a question of both sides believing in what they were doing. They were not able to communicate between themselves.

Horace Alexander: During Civil Disobedience communication was quite impossible.

B.R. Nanda: May I go to the period 1937-39 when the Congress was in Office. Did the India Conciliation Group play any role at that time in preparing for the future?

Horace Alexander: Agatha had been in India once or twice in those years. Without looking at the records, I cannot remember when.

B.R. Nanda: I know that she went there.

Horace Alexander: We sent her deliberately so that she could be posted with the developments uptodate after meeting Gandhi, Jawaharlal and the rest of them. During those two years I prepared a pamphlet. This was about a year after the Congress Ministry was formed. It was published by the Fabians. It was the Conciliation Group that encouraged me to do it. The Fabian Society published it. It explained how these new Governments were functioning. I did not deliberately make it favourable. But it was favourable because I was impressed by the reports that were coming through. I remember sending a copy of it to R.A. Butler who was then in the India Office.

B.R. Nanda: He was the Under Secretary of State.

Horace Alexander: Yes. Somebody who knew him in Cambridge had told me: "Would you not like to be in touch with this man in the India Office?". I met him a good many times and discussed things with him. I remember one incident. The Fabian pamphlet was published in a red cover. When I sent him a copy of it, he wrote back: "Thank you. Once I tore off the red cover, I enjoyed it very much".

B.R. Nanda: In 1939-42 it was a difficult period because the war broke out and the crisis came and then communication became more difficult.

Horace Alexander: Still Gandhi was getting his letters through to Agatha all the time as much as he could. I would like to explain how Nehru came into the picture. When he was let out of jail to go and see his wife who was dying of T.B. in Switzerland, though she did not die immediately ....

B.R. Nanda: This was in the beginning of 1936.

Horace Alexander: Yes; then I was among those who, along with Agatha, met him at Victoria Station in London. I had met him briefly during Irwin's time when I was on that special mission. I met him when he was released from jail for a time in Allahabad. But I knew him very little. I can remember that a few minutes before the train came in, Mr. Krishna Menon who,

of course, had corresponded with him a lot, told me, "I have never met Jawaharlal Nehru. Would you mind introducing him when the time comes?"........

B.R. Nanda: That is very interesting.

Horace Alexander: Agatha was with him. I also got to know him and in fact undertook to see some of his writings through the press.

B.R. Nanda: You sent me those papers about his books.

Horace Alexander: Yes. Agatha gave a great deal of thought and attention to poor Indira - the girl who was left stranded when her mother was dying. She was in Switzerland when Kamala Nehru died. Agatha helped to look after Indira. Through Agatha especially we did become very intimate with the Nehru family as well as with Gandhi during those years. Practically any Indian of importance who came to London - not necessarily a Congressman - saw Agatha. She immediately got in touch with him and asked "May we have a meeting? May I know what you have to say?" and so on. So, we did not confine ourselves by any means just to the orthodox Congress view or Gandhian view.

B.R. Nanda: Did she know Cripps at that time? I am thinking of the 1942 mission.

Horace Alexander: I cannot remember how Agatha knew Cripps. But when 1942 came she was in such close touch with him so that before he set off for India, he said that he wanted to have a meeting with our Group to get our views on the proposals he was taking. Heath was taken ill and Agatha said to me: "You will have to take the Chair" which I had to do. Of course, there was not much time and Cripps was under pressure. He was just leaving for India. Ten of us gathered there and I invited him to speak and say what he had to say. When he had spoken for about two minutes, I interrupted to say: "Of course, this is absolutely confidential". When I interrupted, he said "Yes, indeed it is". So, that little group was taken into confidence about the proposals which he was taking to India. Neither the press nor anybody else knew about it. Polak and

others had certain comments to make. Agatha with her close pulse on the developments and feelings in India said, in spite of her high regard for Stafford Cripps: "I do not believe that they will accept it. It is too late. They would have accepted it six months ago".

B.R. Nanda: Because of the non-accession clause also. Each province and each Indian State was given permission not to accede to India. That would have meant complete breaking up of Indian union. It was worse than Pakistan because in their case secession was only in respect of one part. In India it would have meant that 562 States and 11 Provinces were given option not to accede. They got worried about it. Did you see this aspect at that time?

Horace Alexander: No, not clearly. I think you know about all this - what Gandhiji was alleged to have said about it at that time. I need not repeat it.

B.R. Nanda: It is true.

Horace Alexander: This thing he never said, but what he did say surely was a much simpler thing. That got exaggerated. What he said was 'These proposals are a post-dated cheque - fullstop'. That was all he said. Then some ingenious Indian journalist added the words "on a crashing bank".

B.R. Nanda: Recently we have discovered that the phrase 'A post-dated cheque on a crashing bank' came from K.M. Panikkar to the Maharaja of Bikaner.

Horace Alexander: The "post-dated cheque" but not the crashing bank.

B.R. Nanda: Panikkar in his mischievous mood said that to the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Maharaja of Patiala and it was repeated by Iyengar in a paper 'Roy's Weekly'. That is how it spread.

Horace Alexander: Some years later, a long time after, after Gandhiji's death I had correspondence with Devadas about this and I understood that the Gandhi's actual saying was that this looked like a post-dated cheque. It is perfectly true. He

exactly expressed it. Gandhi, you see, already discerned before Cripps set off 'It is too late for me to be interested in any post-dated cheque'. He used that expression. It is exactly what he meant. The only thing they were interested in was something immediate.

B.R. Nanda: You were in India in 1947-48?

Horace Alexander: Yes.

B.R. Nanda: Do you remember the negotiations with the Muslim League for partition of India?

Horace Alexander: Yes.

B.R. Nanda: Did you have any contact with the Muslim leaders at that time?

Horace Alexander: Yes.

B.R. Nanda: What was your reading of their mood and attitude?

Horace Alexander: Agatha and I were both there at the time of the Cabinet Mission - all through that time and in very close touch with Gandhi and his colleagues on the one side and with the Cabinet Mission members on the other. Not of course in such close touch with the Muslim League people but once or twice at least Agatha and I went together to see Mr. Jinnah.

B.R. Nanda: It is interesting.

Horace Alexander: Well, we did not get any where after meeting him.

B.R. Nanda: How did he impress you?

Horace Alexander: During those earlier talks with him - I am speaking subject to memory - it must have been earlier, I do feel that I had met him in London earlier at the time of the Round Table Conference even though he was not in it. I did not find that I had any sort of easy access to him at all. The Chief thing I remember was that I said to him 'Mr. Jinnah I want to know from you when you have achieved Pakistan, what kind of relationship will Pakistan have with India'. 'Oh', he said 'we will be on the friendliest of terms. There is no

reason why we should not be on very good terms. We should make treaties of friendship to cover all sorts of common economic affairs and commercial interests. Once we have Pakistan, India and Pakistan will be on the best of terms'. I got the impression that he really meant it.

B.R. Nanda: What was your reading of the British official mind in 1946-47? They wanted India to stay united? The local men - I am not talking of Lord Mountbatten and the Parties here - what was their mind? What do you think about the trend of the official thinking - of the ICS, the Political Department and so on?

Horace Alexander: My impression is, probably a lot of them at heart ~~was~~ were still pro-Muslim and thought some kind of partition was inevitable, the only way to prevent bloodshed and the rest of it and to ensure peace for India. But one man I had come to know - he was the Governor of U.P., Sir Francis Wylie and I was staying with him. I stayed with him just before Mountbatten made his final announcement. Well, at that moment, he said, 'I hope they will not agree to partition. I don't mind how slight the connection is, but do let them keep some real unity. The moment India is partitioned all sorts of vested interests in the two separate States will arise and you cannot ever bring them together again. So I am still hoping that Partition will be avoided".

B.R. Nanda: It is very penetrating.

Horace Alexander: Now I imagine he was the one British Governor who was talking like that. When he said that I recalled what Cripps had said to me in Delhi at the time of the beginning of the Cabinet Mission. When they met, he said of all the Governors Wylie was the only man who talked any sense.

B.R. Nanda: That is my feeling. The official thinking was, briefly, these people are not fit for independence. So most of the objections were so to say .... They thought this was a very good argument for not parting with power and they were very happy that as the Hindus would never accept the Pakistan demand, there would be no agreement and 'we would

stay on'. So, that was the local thinking; (I am not talking of the wider vision and the people here and the friends of India.) They thought their quarrels would keep them apart. I am not so sure but I thought and I feel that they imagined that this partition demand would mean a sort of end to the deadlock and it would help them.

May I ask one or two things. Mr. Henry Polak died some years ago. Have you got any information where his papers are or something could be done about it?

Horace Alexander: I have not been in touch with his family at all since his death. I did meet his son long ago but I do not know any member of his family. Perhaps you can find out. His son, Leon Polak, I suppose, is still at the same address in London.

B.R. Nanda: And the papers you were kind enough to send me, they were correspondence between you and Pandit Nehru.

Horace Alexander: Yes.

B.R. Nanda: I wonder if you have any other paper or correspondence with Gandhiji and other leaders.

Horace Alexander: Oh, Yes, I have. But I think all my letters from Gandhi have been copied and I did all that while Devdas was still living.

B.R. Nanda: They may be with Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. What about other leaders? You were corresponding with other leaders also. What I was thinking is: if you do not need them immediately for your books, then we can photo-copy them here. My friend here will arrange it for me and take the photo copies and put them in our museum and you can use them whenever you think necessary. You can say 'You can keep them closed for ten years, afterwards you can throw then open for research'. Kindly give thought to it.

Horace Alexander: I will try to look out for Rajaji's correspondence. I had various letters with him. He is a very good correspondent, as you know. I might have one or two old letters from Sapru.

B.R. Nanda: ~~You~~ We can take anything concerning India, even the work you did for Bengal Famine, even your activities in the social sphere, will be most valuable to us. In fact I would like to have more information about your activities; apart from these people, in our library archives we are collecting papers not only on Nehru, not only on Indian leaders but on the entire history of this period. I feel your correspondence even about Opium ~~side~~ question, the Opium agitation, and about Indians Overseas would be very interesting. In fact, I might be able to write myself. This thing fascinates me. The little paragraph in my last Chapter I would like to develop into something bigger, either an essay or a book. So I request you to give thought to this.

Horace Alexander: I must sort out my papers; a lot of sorting I need to do.